

## Figurative Expressions in the Short Story of ‘Sepotong Tubuh’ and their Translation into English



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### Abstract

This paper is a descriptive translation study focusing on the types of figurative expressions used in the short story of ‘Sepotong Tubuh’ and how they are translated into English in the short story of ‘Body’. The study departs from a paradigm that looks upon the translation of the short story as a product and tries to analyze the theme of the short story in both the source and the target language texts since the theme is the motivating force of any literary works. Understanding the theme will lead to the understanding of the figurative expressions used in the short story as the use of figurative expressions is motivated by the theme of the short story. Theoretically, the study is an eclectic one based on the theories concerning strategies for translating figurative expression proposed by Larson and the theory of translation proposed by Nida and Taber. This paper is expected in the first place to provide some insights for those who are interested in translation studies especially figurative expressions and in the second place to be beneficial for translation practices.

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### 1. Introduction

This study is concerned with translation, namely the translation of figurative expressions in the short story “*Sepotong Tubuh*” into “Body”. Nida and Taber (1974:12) state that translating consists in reproducing in the TL the closest natural equivalent of the SL message, first in terms of meaning, and secondly in terms of style (Catford, 1965:20). Translating figurative expressions from the source text into the target texts may lead to difficulty in discovering their meanings or to misunderstanding. Therefore framing the interpretation is really needed in the analysis.

When the concern of this study is on figurative expressions, theme construction can be taken as the motivating force for the use of those figurative expressions in the short story. In relation to the figurative expressions used in the

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short story under study, there are two problems of interest to be discussed in this paper. The problems under concern are as follows:

- a) What is the condition of equivalence in the translation of the theme of the SL short story into the TL short story?
- b) What strategies are applied in the translation of figurative expressions from the SL short story '*Sepotong Tubuh*' into the TL short story 'Body'?

With respect to the translation of a short story in which figurative expressions are intensively used, the analysis of the figurative expressions should necessarily be based on the theme of the short story, since the use of figurative expressions is quite likely motivated by the construction of the theme as the central force in the short story.

## 2. Research Methods

As it has been mentioned previously, this study is concerned with translation, namely the translation of figurative expressions in a short story. In relation to this matter, the main theory applied is the theory of translation proposed by Nida and Taber. Nida and Taber (1974:12) state that translating consists in reproducing in the TL the closest natural equivalent of the SL message, first in terms of meaning, and secondly in terms of style (Catford, 1965:20).

According to Larson (1998:121), there are at least five types of figurative expressions. They are *metonymy*, *synecdoche*, *idioms*, *euphemism*, and *hyperbole*. While Keraf (2002: 126) adds some other types of figurative expressions including *antithesis*, *pleonasm*, *paradox*, *simile*, *metaphor*, *personification*, *irony*, and *sarcasm*.

From those types of figurative expressions above, the ones that are found in the short story under study include euphemism, hyperbole, personification, metaphor, metonymy, sarcasm, and synecdoche.

Besides, Larson also describes strategies for translating figurative expressions. Strategies for translating figurative expressions, as the main concern of this study, are essential to be discussed. Larson (1998:124) proposes three general strategies in which metonymy and synecdoche are to be translated.

- a) The sense of the word may be translated non-figuratively; that is, the intended meaning may be made plain so that there is no longer a figurative sense in the receptor language translation.
- b) Retaining the word in the original, but adding the sense of the word.
- c) Substituting a figurative expression of the TL for the figurative expression of the SL.

In addition to those strategies mentioned above, there are five others strategies for translating metaphors (Larson, 1998:279).

- a) The metaphor may be kept if the TL permits (that is if it sounds natural and is understood appropriately by the readers).
- b) The metaphor may be translated as a simile (adding *like* or *as*).
- c) The meaning of the metaphor may be translated without keeping the metaphorical imagery.
- d) The metaphor may be kept and the meaning explained (that is, the topic and/or point of similarity may be presented with extra description)
- e) The metaphor of the source language may be substituted with a metaphor in the target language if there is one that has the same meaning.

The three general strategies in which metonymy and synecdoche are to be translated are actually the same as the last three strategies for translating metaphors. These strategies for translating metaphor can be applied to any type of figurative expressions since in its wider sense, metaphor covers all types of figurative expressions (Yulianti, 2005:26).

Mac Lachlan and Reid (1994) explain the importance of framing in any acts of interpretation. They say that no communication can take place without interpretation, and no interpretation can take place without framing. Framing is a way of understanding which is always involved in the interpretation of a text. In interpreting the meaning of a text, readers automatically draw upon their everyday knowledge which is stored and organized in their memory which is called cognitive frame. Understanding even very simple texts involves the activation of background knowledge.

The data of this study were taken from one of a number of interesting short stories written by Oka Rusmini entitled "*Sepotong Tubuh*" and its English translation "Body". There are two personal reasons for choosing this short story: (1) the theme of the short story is really interesting, which is about woman's fatigue, emotion and attitude in response to male's supremacy over the female and (2) the short story makes use of certain figurative expressions that meet the requirements set for this study.

This study was conducted through a library research. The method adopted for collecting the data in this study was observation and documentation done by reading closely the short stories under study which carry quite a number of

figurative expressions in them, then the two short stories were compared as many times as necessary to one another. The figurative expressions and their translations were identified.

The technique of analyzing the data was the qualitative one, in which the meaning of the figurative expressions was determined and described explicitly based on its relevance to the theme of the short story. The second step of the analysis was focused on seeing the strategy adopted for translating the figurative expressions proposed by Larson (1998). This was done in order to learn the condition of equivalence of the translation of figurative expressions from the SL short story into the TL short story. The analysis of this study was started with an attempt to determine the theme of both SL and TL short stories. This was done under the assumption that theme is central in any poetic work because it represents the global meaning or the central idea of the work for which all other elements within the work assume their functions in relation to one another. In this way, those elements are supposed to be present or employed under the force of the theme. By comparing the figurative expressions in the SL short story and how they were handled in their translation, the strategies adopted by the translator could be identified.

### 3. Results and Analysis

#### 3.1 Theme of the Short Story as Motivating Force

The short story presents a dialogue between two women, a mother, and her daughter, expressing their madness and pain against the discrimination and injustice of Balinese women in particular over male supremacy. An expression with dynamic tension shown by the two women which in the end only remains neglected so that the whole short story can be taken as showing the woman's fatigue in her struggle against men's dominating role in social life or one under control of male's supremacy over the female (Dwiyani, 2012).

After having close reading to both SL and TL short stories, it can be explained that the theme of the SL short story is maintained in the TL short story properly.

#### 3.2 The Text and Its Analysis

Following are some examples of figurative expressions found in the SL short story and their translations into English.

##### a. Euphemism

It is the use of a mild, comforting, or evasive expression that takes the place of one that is taboo negative offensive, or too direct (Keraf, 2002:140).

For example:

SL : *Tidakkah kau ingin bersedekah pada kosmis dan membiarkan kosmis juga menyaksikan aroma tubuhmu?"* (Rusmini, 2000:45)

TL : *Don't you want to give alms to the cosmos, and let the cosmos witness the aroma of your body?* (Hunter, 2000:45)

The verb phrase '*bersedekah pada kosmos*' means to give an offering to the cosmos. It is meant to give an advice for the woman not to lament her life which is under the control of the male's supremacy. Thanking God by giving offering is much better than lamenting.

SL : *"Makanya aku ingin telanjang. Mungkin aku bisa membersihkan bumi ini dari tumpukan suara-suara. Aku akan menelannya"* (Rusmini, 2000: 44)

TL : *"That's why I want to get naked. Maybe I can rid the world of all piles of voices. Maybe I can swallow them. "* (Hunter, 2000: 44)

The sentence *Makanya aku ingin telanjang* means that the woman wants to express all her dissatisfaction on male's supremacy and wants to change that situation.

**b. Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is an exaggeration or overstatement, usually deliberate and not meant to be taken literally (Larson, 1998:121).

For example:

SL : “*Kau jelmaan dewi, tolong aku, lelakiku tak habis habisnya mencangkuli tubuhku.*”

(Rusmini, 2000: 43)

TL : “You are the incarnation of the goddess, you must help me, my man never stops digging into my body.” (Hunter, 2000: 43)

The sentence *lelaki tak habis habisnya mencangkuli tubuhku* contains figurative meaning, and cannot be construed literally. The meaning is that the male’s supremacy always hurts the woman.

SL : *Perempuan dua puluh tahun itu membuka kebaya yang dipakainya, puting susunya hampir lepas.*

(Rusmini, 2000:44)

TL : The young of twenty years woman opens the blouse, so wide that her nipples nearly spill out.

(Hunter, 2000: 43)

The expression *puting susunya hampir lepas* contains figurative meaning. The woman’s nipples are of course not nearly spill out. But the writer intends to bring the meaning that the woman has been so desperate living under the male’s supremacy.

**c. Personification**

Personification is the assigning of human characteristics to nonhumans (Keraf, 2002:140).

For example:

SL : “*Harum bunga itu begitu menggairahkan. Dia merasa tubuhnya mulai berair.*

*Helai-helai rambutnya mengusap seluruh bagian tubuhnya*” (Rusmini, 2000: 45)

TL : “The fragrance of the blossom stirs her deeply. She feels like her body is starting to turn liquid.

The strands of her hair seem to caress her entire body.” (Hunter, 2000: 45).

The sentence *Helai-helai rambutnya mengusap seluruh bagian tubuhnya* contains implied meaning. The strands of hair cannot caress body. This expression is used to describe that happiness is not from others but it is within us. Even the hair can give us happiness.

SL : “...*Aroma bunga cempaka berhamburan, berlompotan dan turun dari kepin rambutnya.*”

(Rusmini: 2000: 43)

TL : “...the aroma of cempaka blossom spreading wide as it tumbled down the thinning strands of her hair.” (Hunter, 2000: 43)

The expression *Aroma bunga cempaka berhamburan, berlompotan dan turun dari kepin rambutnya* is used figuratively that even in her fatigue of being under the male’s supremacy, woman actually has so many beautiful things in her life as the reasons to keep her heart in blossom like the blossom of *cempaka*.

**d. Sarcasm**

It is a term in rhetoric and general use for sneeringly ironical remarks (Keraf, 2002:143).

For example:

SL : “*Aku juga memiliki keinginan. Kau perempuan tolol.*” (Rusmini, 2000: 45)

TL : I have desires too, You’re really stupid! (Hunter, 2000: 45)

The sentence *kau perempuan tolol* is used sarcastically to advise a woman not to think badly about her life. There are so many beautiful things in life that can make her happy. There is duality in life. A woman should enjoy the beautiful side of being under the male’s supremacy over the female.

SL : *Kau pernah melihat para manusia itu memiliki mulut yang lebih besar daripada tubuh mereka, bahkan kulihat mulutnya memakan kepala” (Rusmini, 2000: 44)*

TL : Have you ever noticed that their mouths are bigger than their bodies, I’ve even seen some that eat their own heads” (Hunter, 2000: 43).

The sarcastic expression above means that the tendency of a human being is to talk more than to think or listen. A human being is described to have a mouth bigger than their bodies, and even more, they ignore their thoughts (heads).

Seen from the analysis of the figurative expressions translation above, it can be described that the strategies applied in the translation of figurative expressions from the SL short story ‘*Sepotong Tubuh*’ into the TL short story ‘Body’ is the first strategy proposed by Larson that is to say the figurative expressions are kept and maintained and the TL permits (they sounds natural and are understood correctly by the readers in the TL).

#### 4. Conclusion

After analyzing the SL short story and its translation with the focus on the translation of the metaphors employed in it, some conclusions can be presented as follows:

- a) The condition of equivalence in the translation of the theme of the SL short story into the TL short story can be described as follows: The use of such figurative expressions in both SL and TL texts is consistently motivated by the theme of the short story which is related to the woman’s fatigue which is expressed in emotion and attitude in response to the male’s supremacy over the female.
- b) The strategies applied in the translation of figurative expressions from the SL short story ‘*Sepotong Tubuh*’ into the TL short story ‘Body’ is only the first strategy proposed by Larson that is to say the figurative expressions are kept and maintained and the TL permits (they sounds natural and are understood correctly by the readers in the TL).

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#### *Statement of authorship*

The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The authors have approved the final article.



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